Infrastructure Development

3491. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REEDY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has accepted in principle, the demand of India regarding financing the infrastructure development to remove a key constraint in growth and poverty alleviation in the country;

(b) if so, whether the World Bank has asked its committee to prepare an action programme;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the total quantum of amount of aid to be provided by the World Bank for development of infrastructure in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNMALA D. SAVANOOR) : (a) In the continuing discussions with the World Bank, the Bank has recognised the need for infrastructure development in India. As part of its Country Assistance Strategy for 1997, the Bank has decided to place added emphasis on capacity building and resource mobilisation for public and private infrastructure investments.

(b) and (c) No Sir. World Bank has not informed the Government about setting up of any such Committee or preparation of an action programme.

(d) Variouse infrastructure projects are under discussions with the World Bank and the quantum of assistance will be known after there projects are appraised and loans finalised.

Visa Policy

3492. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Ministry of Tourism has urged the External Affairs Ministry to ease visa restrictions under bi-lateral agreements with as many as possible countries so that tourists could get visa at airport upon arrival;

(b) if so, whether this is being suggested to doubling the foreign tourist arrival in future; and

(c) if so, to what extent the said proposal has been accepted by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The foreign tourists in groups of four or more arriving by air or sea, sponsored by recognised Indian Travel Agencies and with a pre-drawn itinerary can be granted visa at the airport on the written request of the Travel Agencies to the Immigration Officer.

Properties of Kashmiri Migrants

3493. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Jammu and Kashmir Government have issued instructions barring Kashmiri migrants from selling off their properties left by them in the Kashmir valley;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of Kashmiri migrants who have returned to the Valley during the year 1996-97;

(d) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken by the Government so far to safeguard the interests of Kashmiri migrants; and

(e) the facilities and safeguard offered by the Government to the migrants to return to the valley?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) and (b) The Government of J&K have enacted "The Jammu and Kashmir Migrants immovable Property (Preservation, Protection and Restraint on Distress Sales) Act, 1997 in view of the urgent need to take steps for the preservation and protection of such immovable property as also to put a halt to distress sales by the migrants. The Act does not bar the migrants from selling off their properties. On the other hand, it provides protection as restrictions have been imposed for getting prior permission from the competent authority under the Act which will make the enquiry as to whether the sale is distress sale or not. It has also been provided in the Act that the permission will be deemed to have been granted in case the competent authority does not decide the matter within 15 days from the date of receipt of application. There are other provisions in the Act which provide for safeguarding the properties of the migrants which were left behind by them.

(c) 13 Kashmiri migrant families, comprising 21 persons, had returned in May-June'96 to their homes.

(d) and (e) With the taking over of a popular Government, after successful conduct of Assembly Elections in the State, in October 1996, the State Government has given top priority for formulating a scheme for safe and honourable return of Kashmiri migrants to their native places. The State Government has constituted and Apex level Committee under the Chairmanship of Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation Minister to look into all aspects of the problems of migrants. A Sub-Committee headed by the Finacial Commissioner (Planning & Development) has also been constituted to draw up an action plan for return of migrants after eliciting their views.